

ARCHIVE COPY

ASE 96-6

c. 1

(33)

NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY

NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE

THE WEINBERGER DOCTRINE: IS IT VIABLE TODAY?

CORE COURSE 5 ESSAY

CDR JAMES L HOUSE, USCG, CLASS OF '96
MILITARY STRATEGY AND OPERATIONS
SEMINAR C
SEMINAR LEADERS DR KASS, COL WILLIAMS
ADVISER CAPT MARINER

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 1996		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-1996 to 00-00-1996	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE The Weinberger Doctrine: Is It Viable Today?				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National War College, 300 5th Avenue, Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319-6000				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT see report					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 15	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1984, Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger delivered a draft document to his senior military assistant, Army Major General Colin Powell. He asked Powell to review the draft and pass it along to other members of the administration national security team for their review. Weinberger, who had been deeply troubled by the October 1983 terrorist bombing of the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, Lebanon, had analyzed the question of when and when not to commit U.S. military forces abroad. The result of his analysis was a list of six tests or rules intended to guide decisionmaking in employing America's military might in combat around the world; his six rules ultimately became known as the Weinberger Doctrine.¹

When the Weinberger Doctrine was first made public in November 1984, it was not universally embraced. The media was the source of some criticism, and the long-standing debate between Weinberger and Secretary of State George Shultz on when and where to employ American armed forces became a public one when Shultz presented his own position in various speeches.

The decade since the Weinberger Doctrine was promulgated has presented some situations against which to gauge its viability. Also, the current administration has issued its own views on a policy for committing U.S. military force abroad, of which a March 1996 speech by National Security Advisor Anthony Lake is representative.

This essay will compare and contrast the Weinberger Doctrine with other views of the day (primarily those of George Shultz) and with the Clinton administration policy as articulated by Anthony Lake. It will focus principally on those uses of the military in which combat is expected or at least a distinct possibility, rather than on the various non-combat applications of military resources, such as those described by Lake in his March speech. The analysis will use the context of various failed and successful military interventions in judging whether the Weinberger Doctrine is a viable aid to national security decisionmaking as we enter the 21st century.

BACKGROUND

When first presenting his doctrine in 1984, Weinberger noted that America's history had been one of seeking to avoid conflict, while keeping a strong national defense. He went on to identify two extremes in the thinking on use of military force: isolationists who never want to employ force, and those who

would turn to use of force early in just about any crisis, figuring that mere American military presence, even in small numbers, could provide the solution. He rejected both extremes, of course, reasoning that isolationism would be an abdication of leadership responsibilities, resulting in loss of influence in the world, and indiscriminate use of military force would lead to a replay of the domestic turmoil experienced during the Vietnam War. Weinberger placed a premium on acting strongly on matters affecting the vital interests of the United States and its allies, but felt that the United States could not be the world's sole defender, nor could American will and troops be substituted for those of other nations. Abbreviated versions of his six rules follow. (A complete text of the rules is located in the appendix.)

- #1 - Do not commit forces to combat overseas unless deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies.
- #2 - If necessary to use combat troops, we should do so wholeheartedly, with the clear intention of winning,
- #3 - If we decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives.
- #4 - The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed--their size, composition and disposition--must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.
- #5 - Before committing U.S. combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance of support of the American people and Congress.
- #6 - Commit forces to combat only as a last resort.²

In the words of Colin Powell, the Weinberger Doctrine says, "In short, is the national interest at stake? If the answer is yes, go in, and go in to win. Otherwise, stay out."³

Through a number of public speeches, George Shultz revealed his dissatisfaction with the Weinberger criteria for applying military force as an instrument of foreign policy. He felt that credible military power was essential to the success of diplomacy--that the two had to be used together in practicing statecraft. He agreed with points made by Weinberger, but seemed apprehensive that strict adherence to the six rules would lead to not only avoiding no-win situations, but also declining to take on the 'hard-to-win' cases. He also felt that excessive reluctance to employ military force would lead to loss of American influence in world affairs and leave trusting allies vulnerable to aggression.⁴

More than a decade after the Shultz-Weinberger public debate, the Clinton administration has articulated its own view on the use of military force in the context of its National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement. Like Weinberger, Anthony Lake has identified two unsatisfactory approaches to the issue. But, in contrast to the former SecDef, he places them both in the isolationist camp. First, there are the 'neo-know-nothings' who feel it is safe to retreat from the world scene, then, there are the "backdoor isolationists" (read congressional opponents of administration spending

priorities) who claim to support engagement, but deny the resources required for diplomatic readiness and foreign aid. Quoting the President in this year's State of the Union address, Lake says, "we must confront challenges now--or we will pay a much higher price for our indifference later." While identifying diplomacy and power of example as the tools of first resort, and rejecting the notion of the United States becoming the world's policeman, Lake clearly comes across as having a lower threshold than Weinberger for use of military force abroad. Although silent on some of Weinberger's points, such as the need for public support, Lake breaks new ground in trying to define the concept of "vital national interest." He identifies seven circumstances, "which, taken in some combination or even alone, may call for the use of force or our military forces

- (i) To defend against direct attacks on the United States, its citizens, and its allies,
- (ii) To counter aggression,
- (iii) To defend our key economic interests, which is where most Americans see their most immediate stake in our international engagement,
- (iv) To preserve, promote and defend democracy, which enhances our security and the spread of our values,
- (v) To prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, international crime and drug trafficking,
- (vi) To maintain our reliability, because when our partnerships are strong and confidence in our leadership is high, it is easier to get others to work with us, and to share the burdens of leadership,
- (vii) And for humanitarian purposes, to combat famines, natural disasters and gross abuse of human rights with, occasionally, our military forces."⁵

Lake also discusses three aspects of using military force, once the decision to do so has been made. He points out the value of merely threatening to employ military force (provided the threat is credible), and makes the case that in some circumstances selective use of force is more appropriate than a massive application. Finally, he makes a strong case for "carefully designed exit strategies," defined as having clear military objectives and deadlines for withdrawal. He includes military interventions in Haiti and Bosnia as successful applications of the administration's doctrine, an interesting choice that will be discussed in the analysis that follows.

ANALYSIS

In order to compare and contrast the three principal policy positions described in the foregoing section, the analysis will look at each of the six Weinberger rules, grouping similar or complementary rules together where appropriate

#1 - Do not commit forces to combat overseas unless deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies; and

#6 - Commit forces to combat only as a last resort.

With regard to rules #1 and #6, there is not much in contention among the three views in terms of the wording they use. Weinberger, Shultz and Lake all speak of national interest and imply--if not state outright--that military force is at the extreme end of the power spectrum. Differences between their positions are apt to show up in how one defines a "vital national interest." I view media criticism--such as William Safire's charge that Weinberger's concept of "vital interest" would not permit applying military strength "until the very life of our country is threatened"⁶--as a shallow interpretation of rule #1 and a foray into sensationalist journalism.

Lake tries to bound the scope of national interests for which we should use military force through his list of seven circumstances. While seeming to go further than the other two in defining the things for which he would have the United States employ the military instrument, he stops short of being prescriptive, describing his guidelines as "the circumstances, which, taken in some combination or even alone, may call for the use of force or our military forces "[emphasis added]" The seven circumstances present a spectrum. At one end are the conditions which, most would agree, call for use of military force (defend against direct attack, counter aggression), at the other end are the situations (humanitarian relief, natural disasters) which might be addressed with military resources, but not in the combat role to which the Weinberger Doctrine speaks. In between the two extremes are circumstances which are more vague (e.g., promote democracy, prevent terrorism)--representing situations about which it is hard to say whether Weinberger, or even Shultz, would favor commitment of combat forces. The truth is, Lake's attempt to define "vital national interest" is not all that helpful. He describes the broadest possible spectrum of circumstances--direct attack on the United States, hurricane relief, and everything in between, neglects to distinguish between use of military force in combat situations and peacetime application of military resources, and, as seen in the quote above, is vague in how his criteria might be applied.

On the issue of vital interests and when to commit forces, Weinberger, too, has a problem with clarity and consistency. Within his November 28, 1984 speech, he is inconsistent with regard to the relation between our national interests and those of our allies. On the one hand, he says that we cannot turn our back on our allies when their vital interests are at stake, and his first rule states that we "should not commit forces to combat overseas unless deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies."⁸ He then says, "we should only engage our troops if we must do so as a matter of our own vital national interest."⁹ seemingly leaving our allies' interests off the table. In the very next sentence, however, he again opens the possibility of using our troops to defend another sovereign nation's territory, even in the absence of a direct threat against the United States, if we receive a "strong invitation" from the threatened ally. This question of how we will act in our allies' interests becomes central to any discussion on employment of U.S. forces in a combat role in such places as Taiwan and South Korea.

- #2 - If necessary to use combat troops, we should do so wholeheartedly, with the clear intention of winning; and**
- #4 - The relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed -- their size, composition and disposition -- must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary.**

Central to Weinberger's position is the need for a commitment to win, manifested in applying enough force to achieve the objective(s). This thought is brought out in rule #2, with rule #4 expanding on the concept by pointing out the need to continually reassess the situation and progress towards the objective(s), adjusting the size and/or nature of the military force as needed.

Weinberger caught some flak on this point at the time--unwarranted, I believe--from the likes of William Safire ("a gradualist, incremental approach may be just the ticket in some situations enough and on time does not mean all or nothing"¹⁰) and Shultz ("does [the lesson of Vietnam] mean there are no situations where a discrete assertion of power is needed or appropriate for limited purposes? Unlikely"¹¹). But, Weinberger does say, as part of rule #2, that "if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly." The "all-or-nothing" label just doesn't stick, I don't see the Shultz and Weinberger positions on this point as all that different.

Weinberger, perhaps feeling the need to defend decisions made on his watch, makes an interesting distinction with regard to the Beirut mission. I view this as the biggest hole in the Weinberger Doctrine. He attempts to distance the deployment of U.S. Marines to Lebanon as different from a straightforward commitment of U.S. forces to combat overseas by describing it as joining forces with other nations for a

peacekeeping mission. He said, "we did not configure or equip those forces for combat--they were armed only for their self-defense."¹² He went on to say that once it became apparent conditions precluded them from accomplishing their peacekeeping mission, their numbers should have been increased and they should have been equipped for combat, or they should have just been withdrawn. It is hard to swallow this distinction, then or now. Putting troops into the midst of a shooting war--or even a fragile cease-fire--is tantamount putting them in combat, regardless of the absence of offensive combat intentions.

In discussing how to use force, Lake "sort of" echoes Weinberger, but not exactly. He admits that the force must be "adequate to the task, and then some,"¹³ but only after establishing as an underlying principle that "the selective but substantial use of force is sometimes more appropriate than its massive use."¹⁴ Incredibly, he uses the "so far, so good" status of the ongoing Bosnia deployment as evidence of success for this Clinton administration principle, saying that committing our troops to a ground war would not have achieved peace and would have become Vietnam revisited. The hole in his argument is that regardless of their numbers, armament, or mission, the U.S. troops in Bosnia are very much in harm's way, any claims of success are premature, at best.

#3 - If we decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives.

There is not a great deal of disparity between the Weinberger, Shultz and Lake approaches, with regard to having clear objectives going in. However, there is some difference in how they propose to end the military involvement.

Weinberger talks of the risk of losing (or never gaining) support for a policy if the goals are not clear, and goes on to point out that application of military force without a clear understanding of what is to be achieved "would also earn us the scorn of our troops, who would have an understandable opposition to being used casually."¹⁵ Shultz acknowledges the lesson from Vietnam of needing a clear and precise mission. Lake discusses the need to have a clear mission with achievable military goals. Interestingly, he uses Bosnia as an example of where the administration set forth clear, achievable military goals--in my mind, a questionable claim.

In an apparent attempt to address exit strategy, Lake then speaks at length about deadlines, saying we must "set deadlines for withdrawal based on the accomplishment of those missions."¹⁶ He argues persuasively that the United States must have an exit strategy when employing military forces abroad and gives some very sound reasons: not aiding other nations in evading their own responsibilities, not

undercutting the government being assisted by assuming too much of their responsibilities, and avoiding the resentment brought about by overstaying our welcome. Unfortunately, he bases the exit strategy on the element of time, prescribing preset deadlines as the basis for ending a military mission, as opposed to an end-state, or specific condition(s) which we expect to create before we disengage. He points to Haiti as one successful application of a deadline ("about a year and a half" being the prediction going in), and admittedly, the situation in Haiti bears out his claim--for now. However, he also points to Bosnia as another successful example of deadline-setting (we will complete military tasks "in about one year"). Clearly, the jury is still out on that operation. There is at present little assurance that once our troops are withdrawn in accordance with the deadline-based exit strategy, the warring parties--having successfully waited out the U.S. intervention--will not just take the conflict back to where it was "about a year" earlier and make it deadlier, having rested and resupplied.

#5 - Before committing U.S. combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance of support of the American people and Congress.

Of the six Weinberger rules, this one illuminates what is probably the knottiest problem with regard to our use of military force abroad. Weinberger once again took some flak soon after his 1984 speech, with pundits picking up on his requirement for support before committing troops. Safire claimed that Weinberger wanted to "take a poll before we pull a trigger,"¹⁷ and William F. Buckley put forth that any "vital" mission must be undertaken, and it's the job of the political leadership to rally public support behind the decision.¹⁸ Chalk up the Safire remark to another shallow interpretation. With a more liberal reading of Weinberger's text, one could infer he meant that public/congressional support should at least be forthcoming if not already present.

Weinberger and Shultz are pretty much in step on the public support aspect. Both acknowledge the difficulties caused by the War Powers Act struggle between the executive and legislative branches. The wide distribution of power and leadership within the Congress creates an obstacle for timely, decisive negotiations with the President. Also, our open society and inter-branch checks and balances result in debates on use of military force being played out before the world, leading to "a loss of coherence and recurring uncertainty in the minds of friend and foe about the aims and constancy of the United States."¹⁹ Interestingly, Lake is silent on the topic of public or congressional support, anchoring his approach in the rightness of the cause and the need for the U.S. to exert its leadership in the world.

Public support--and, by extension, congressional support--is a slippery thing. Public opinion cannot be disregarded, but it also cannot be the sole guide for governmental action. Why? Because it is

subject to change, sometimes drastically and in a short time span, because it is sometimes (often?) based on incomplete and/or incorrect information, and because it is so easily manipulated by those who hold views not necessarily in the mainstream of public thought

Some generalities regarding public support for use of military force are well expressed by Bruce Jentleson, who points out that it "varies according to the principal policy objective for which force is used"²⁰ He goes on to say that support for military force is more likely in cases wherein an adversary is restrained against aggression outside his borders, and less likely where force is used to remake other governments Jentleson also says that public support will vary according to the interests at stake, and how important they are seen to be (which in turn depends on presence of military alliances, geographic proximity, and geopolitical primacy), the presence of presidential cues which tend to rally public support behind the government, and the extent to which risk aversion will come into play, based on the strength of perceptions that a policy will fail or casualties will be incurred²¹

It is no secret that the media play a central role in shaping public opinion, by selecting what information is disseminated and by the spin they put on their reporting of the facts The buildup to the 1991 Gulf War provides examples of the relationship between the media and public opinion Thomas DuBois attributes a decrease in public support for U S policy during Desert Shield to aggressive media reporting on family hardships brought about by the call-up of Reserves and National Guard units At the same time, the Bush administration employed the media to garner public support by stressing the vital national interests at risk, the multinational nature of the operation, and the evilness of Saddam Hussein²²

Another aspect of public opinion regarding commitment of U S forces abroad is described as the halo effect That is, marginal or weak public support for U S intervention tends to grow considerably once a decision is made to commit forces abroad A 50 percent level of public support for the Bush administration policies in the Gulf in late 1990²³--matched by similar lukewarm support in Congress--transformed into a strong patriotic spirit and extremely strong support for the troops after the shooting started in January 1991 A month prior to our September 1994 intervention in Haiti, only 31 percent of the public supported use of U S forces to oust the Cedras regime²⁴ Yet, in the aftermath of the bloodless "invasion," public support rebounded markedly Clearly, the strength and duration of the halo effect is directly dependent on mission success and low numbers of casualties We only have to look to U S interventions in Lebanon and Somalia to see where failures and/or numerous casualties would have taken public support in Kuwait and Haiti

The halo effect has typically applied to Congress as well. The best recent example is the congressional Republican leadership falling in behind President Clinton's decision to intervene militarily in Bosnia, despite pre-decisional misgivings or opposition. There is some evidence this trend may diminish in the not-too-distant future, however. A recent Washington Post article reported that within the Republican party, the era of globally-oriented congressional leaders may be giving way to a vocal and influential bloc of junior members who are wary of foreign entanglements and focused on the domestic agenda which they regard as the electorate's mandate. These junior Republicans, who have made their voices heard in recent budget deliberations and other elements of the congressional agenda, are said to reject the isolationism that some propose but they are serving notice they will consider carefully what is truly in our vital national interest, and will not rubber-stamp a foreign military intervention simply because the administration has decided to intervene.²⁵

CONCLUSIONS

The underlying premise of the Weinberger Doctrine--commit U S military forces if necessary to defend vital national interests and do so with the intention of winning--is still very sound in the environment of today and the foreseeable future. Furthermore, while there has been and will likely continue to be contention on some of the details surrounding the six rules and their implementation, there is general agreement on Weinberger's underlying premise.

Powell's account of months-long "squabbling" between Weinberger and Shultz aside,²⁶ a reading of speeches in which they presented their views shows considerable similarity in where they come down on when to commit U S military force abroad. To be sure, Shultz tends to lean forward in the saddle and Weinberger leans back, but I see them as riding the same horse. In fact, differences attributable to their personal views are at least equaled by institutional differences, which tend to have the diplomatic corps and the military establishment each overestimating each other's capabilities in resolving crises abroad. Our leadership must constantly seek to find the middle ground between the extreme positions that Foggy Bottom and the Pentagon may at times adopt with regard to use of military force. The distance between the two positions varies according to the issue at hand, but part of the art of national security leadership is knowing where to come down between them in order to best serve the nation's interests.

Differences between the Weinberger Doctrine and the Clinton administration view, as stated by Anthony Lake, are greater than those between Weinberger and Shultz. I find the Weinberger approach

superior, in that it takes into account issues not addressed by Lake (public opinion, in particular), and is not flawed by the time-oriented "deadline exit strategy," espoused by Lake

Public and congressional opinion must certainly weigh heavily in making a decision to commit U S combat forces overseas. If the support is not there initially, there must be some reasonable expectation of gaining it if the "go" decision is made. The halo effect can help some, but leaders need to remember that the halo can be a very short-lived phenomenon, if we are not seen as winning or if U S casualties are incurred--sometimes even in small numbers.

Defining "vital national interest" remains problematic. The circular logic of saying "vital interests are those we'll fight for" is no more helpful than the all-encompassing spectrum of circumstances offered by Lake. The concept defies application of any sort of formula or other rigid approach. The truth is, our sense of what is vital varies from person to person, and can change over time. It is affected by the actions of other countries. It is subject to manipulation by media reporting, as well as by the words and actions of politicians. National security strategists must continually employ all the information and intellectual tools at their disposal to best understand the Nation's interests and weigh the risks, costs and benefits associated with use of military force.

The Weinberger Doctrine is still viable, and better than the current administration's construct for use of U S combat forces abroad. The six rules, in particular, are still applicable to today's environment and should stand without revision. Weinberger, Powell, *et al* developed the doctrine in the shadow of the failures of Vietnam and Beirut. With the passage of time since then, some of the emotion conveyed in Weinberger's speech--that, I feel, led critics to misinterpret his real meaning--can be replaced by a more dispassionate context that is closer to the Shultz approach. Also, Weinberger's characterization of the Beirut mission as distinct from commitment of U S forces to combat should be discarded.

Decisions made in applying the rules will clearly be the key to whether the United States succeeds or fails in its national security strategy. Important questions such as what are our vital national interests, and how much military force is necessary to demonstrate clear intention to win, will challenge our leaders to exercise the best possible judgment. The Weinberger Doctrine still gives them a good framework in which to make those important decisions.

However, the reality of the current political situation does not augur well for application of Weinberger's six rules in the near term. As pointed out above, the Clinton administration view on when

and how to employ American military force is fundamentally at odds with the Weinberger position. Rather than learn from the lessons of Vietnam, Lebanon and Somalia, the present leadership seems more focused on liberal employment of U S military resources across a broad spectrum in support of its engagement and enlargement strategy. Only another tragedy involving deployed U S forces, or a change in the White House brought about by the upcoming election, will bring American policy closer to the Weinberger Doctrine.

Notes

¹ Colin L. Powell, My American Journey (New York: Random House, 1995) 302-303

² Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," Remarks to the National Press Club, Washington, 28 Nov 1984, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release No 609-84 1-5

³ Powell 303

⁴ George Shultz, "Power and Diplomacy in the 1980s," Address before the Trilateral Commission, 3 Apr 1984, Department of State Bulletin, May 1984 12-15

⁵ Anthony Lake, "Defining Missions, Setting Deadlines Meeting New Security Challenges in the Post-Cold War World," Remarks at George Washington University, Washington, 6 Mar 1996, The White House Office of the Press Secretary Release dated 7 Mar 1996 4-5

⁶ William Safire, "Only the 'Fun' Wars," New York Times 3 Dec 1984 A23

⁷ Lake 4

⁸ Weinberger 4

⁹ Weinberger 4

¹⁰ Safire A23

¹¹ Shultz 13

¹² Weinberger 4

¹³ Lake 5

¹⁴ Lake 5

¹⁵ Weinberger 3

¹⁶ Lake 6

¹⁷ Safire A23

¹⁸ William F Buckley, "The Causes of War," National Review 28 Dec 1984 13

¹⁹ Shultz 15

²⁰ Bruce W Jentleson, "The Pretty Prudent Public Post Post-Vietnam American Opinion on the Use of Military Force," International Studies Quarterly 36 (1992) 49

²¹ Jentleson 50-52

²² Thomas R DuBois, "The Weinberger Doctrine and the Liberation of Kuwait," Essays on Strategy IX, ed Thomas C Gill (Washington NDU Press, 1993) 133

²³ DuBois 133

²⁴ Bruce W Nelan, "Invasion on Hold," Time 15 Aug 1994 23

²⁵ Helen Dewar, "World of Difference GOP Generations Vie on Global Affairs," Washington Post 9 Apr 1996 A1,A5

²⁶ Powell 303

THE WEINBERGER DOCTRINE¹

*Six tests to be applied when weighing the use of U S combat forces abroad
[Emphasis included in original]*

(1) First, the United States should not commit forces to combat overseas unless the particular engagement or occasion is deemed vital to our national interest or that of our allies. That emphatically does not mean that we should declare beforehand, as we did with Korea in 1950, that a particular area is outside our strategic perimeter.

(2) Second, if we decide it is necessary to put combat troops into a given situation, we should do so wholeheartedly, and with the clear intention of winning. If we are unwilling to commit the forces or resources necessary to achieve our objectives, we should not commit them at all. Of course if the particular situation requires only limited force to win our objectives, then we should not hesitate to commit forces sized accordingly. When Hitler broke treaties and remilitarized the Rhineland, small combat forces then could perhaps have prevented the holocaust of World War II.

(3) Third, if we do decide to commit forces to combat overseas, we should have clearly defined political and military objectives. And we should know precisely how our forces can accomplish those clearly defined objectives. And we should have and send the forces needed to do just that. As Clausewitz wrote, "no one starts a war--or rather, no one in his senses ought to do so--without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war, and how he intends to conduct it."

War may be different today than in Clausewitz's time, but the need for well-defined objectives and a consistent strategy is still essential. If we determine that a combat mission has become necessary for our vital national interests, then we must send forces capable to do the job--and not assign a combat mission to a force configured for peacekeeping.

(4) Fourth, the relationship between our objectives and the forces we have committed--their size, composition and disposition--must be continually reassessed and adjusted if necessary. Conditions and objectives invariably change during the course of a conflict. When they do change, then so must our combat requirements. We must continuously keep as a beacon light before us the basic questions: "Is this conflict in our national interest?" "Does our national interest require us to fight, to use force of arms?" If the answers are "yes", then we must win. If the answers are "no", then we should not be in combat.

(5) Fifth, before the U S commits combat forces abroad, there must be some reasonable assurance we will have the support of the American people and their elected representatives in Congress. This support cannot be achieved unless we are candid in making clear the threats we face, the support cannot be sustained without continuing and close consultation. We cannot fight a battle with the Congress at home while asking our troops to win a war overseas or, as in the case of Vietnam, in effect asking our troops not to win, but just to be there.

(6) Finally, the commitment of U S forces to combat should be a last resort.

¹ Caspar W. Weinberger, "The Uses of Military Power," Remarks to the National Press Club, Washington, 28 Nov 1984, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release No. 609-84.